

or £500 pounds a year could be added to the Welsh revenues. Elizabeth was so pleased with him that on 9 February 1577, Greville was given the reversion of Clerk of the Council and Clerk of the Signet, the major source of his public revenue for the rest of his life and the basis of his great fortune.<sup>151</sup>

As MacVane observed, Greville had found a way directly to the Queen's heart – through her purse. That 'a handsome young courtier of twenty-two could show her a way to add to her revenue, in a way that disturbed no one but a few minor officials' was a fact 'not to pass by unnoticed'.<sup>152</sup> From that time on, the records show that Elizabeth 'appreciated Greville's society so highly that she refused him permission to gratify his desire for foreign travel'. On at least three occasions in the years before 1584, Greville had hopes of military action, but was always stopped on the direct orders of the Queen. According to his biographers, Elizabeth 'found his presence too attractive to part with'.<sup>153</sup> Nevertheless, Greville did 'escape' abroad at times 'and suffered accordingly from her displeasure'.<sup>154</sup> In 1579, he received royal permission to join the English contingent going into the Low Countries, but according to Greville's own account, having shipped all his horses and kit to Dover, at the last moment he was 'stayed by a princely mandate, the messenger Sir Edward Dyer'.<sup>155</sup>

In 1585, Greville and Philip Sidney left the court after securing a commission from Elizabeth to escort Don Antonio, the claimant to the Portuguese throne, from his landing at Plymouth to the court in London. What they failed to tell Elizabeth, when she graciously granted them this commission of honour, was that far from planning to return with Don Antonio as ordered, they had been very actively arranging for months to leave the country with their secret partner Sir Francis Drake for the purpose of 'invading and possessing America'.<sup>156</sup> At the end of August, Drake, as agreed, sent a secret message from Plymouth to Sidney and Greville at court. Drake assured Sidney that everything was ready and he gave him the impression that it was 'as if the whole fleet stayed only for him and the wind'. But Drake, for reasons of his own, betrayed their plans to the Queen, delayed the departure, and then sailed with Sidney and his 'loving and beloved Achates'<sup>157</sup> Greville, 'on the *Elizabeth Bonaventura*', before 'they were taken off for some reason and returned to shore'.<sup>158</sup>

Sidney and Greville were the first architects and prime movers of the plan for an English invasion of America. Thus Greville, who planned

to invade America and helped found the East India Company,<sup>159</sup> can be considered to have been 'one of the founders of the British Empire'.<sup>160</sup>

After their return to port, Greville and Sidney were ordered back to court to face the Queen's wrath. Greville's punishment was to remain at court in disgrace, to be denied further foreign service and to be restricted to home duties. In spite of this very lenient treatment by Elizabeth, who could have ruined him at a stroke by banishment from her court, Greville still felt that he had been hard done by, 'for this importunity of mine to change my course and seem to prefer anything before my service about her, this princess of government as well as kingdom's made me live in her court a spectacle of disfavour, too long as I conceived'. Greville was again in trouble with Elizabeth after he had gone to France without her permission and fought for Navarre in his great victory over Joyeuse at Coutras on 20 October 1587. When he returned to court he was banished from the Queen's presence 'full six months'. However, when she received him again, it was 'after a strange manner' and Elizabeth, to prevent Greville's 'independence from spreading', agreed to his 'going over to be a secret employment of hers'. Elizabeth declared that she 'preferred to protect him to the world with the honour of her employment, rather than, for examples sake, be forced ... to punish him further'.<sup>161</sup>

Finally, Greville, whose dearest wish had been to go to America and seek death or glory with Drake and Sidney, accepted his fate and stopped fighting the Queen's will. In his *Life of Sidney*, Greville makes clear that this decision to submit to her will, abandon his dreams, and seek 'action and honour' at home, was a turning point in his life and his career as a courtier:

I finding the specious fires of youth to prove far more scorching than glorious, called my second thoughts to council. And in that map, clearly discerning action and honour to fly with more wings than one and that it was sufficient for the Plant to grow where his Sovereign's hand had planted it, I found reason to contract my thoughts from those larger but wandering horizons of the world abroad, and bound my prospect within the safe limits of duty in such home services as were acceptable to my Sovereign.

Greville's decision brought him great rewards and high office. Among his many claims to fame, the Recorder of Stratford-upon-Avon 'died reputed to be the richest man in England',<sup>162</sup> and his great